



# City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

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February 4, 2010

Mayor Mike McGinn  
Seattle City Hall, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
600 Fourth Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98124

### **RE: Recommendation for permanent replacement of Office of Housing Director**

Dear Mayor McGinn,

We are writing to you in recognition of the phenomenal performance of Adrienne Quinn as the Director of the Office of Housing over the past five years and to encourage a speedy and very thoughtful search for new leadership.

As the Planning Commission's job has been to advise the Mayor, City Council and City departments on broad planning goals, policies and plans for the physical development of the City our relationship with the Office of Housing has been strong for many years. The Commission's work is framed by the Comprehensive Plan and its vision for Seattle into the 21st Century, and a significant part of that plan focuses on Seattle's need to create affordable housing. In 2007 the Commission crafted an Affordable Housing Action Agenda that we hope will continue to guide progress toward a just and sustainable housing for all income levels in Seattle.

In the years of Ms. Quinn's leadership, the Office of Housing has provided funding to preserve or create nearly 1,900 affordable apartments and help 430 homebuyers purchase their first homes. She also oversaw the multifamily tax-exemption program, which since 2005 has resulted in the creation of 3,282 units, with 1,505 of those affordable to working. In addition she has streamlined regulatory processes and has focused on ending homelessness and creating strong communities. Her work culminated with the City's most successful Housing Levy vote in 20 years, an especially remarkable and welcome success considering this time of economic crisis. We want to be on the record in commending and congratulating Adrienne for her success and in encouraging you to seek in her permanent replacement one who holds these same skills and qualities.

In finding a new Director to lead this important office we hope that you will look for someone who possess the skills that this demanding position requires including:

- Being an inclusive and open leader, engendering trust between a broad and sometimes conflicting set of stakeholders.
- Able to provide thoughtful and effective leadership at the local, state and federal level in shaping policies that better facilitate the creation of affordable housing.
- Understanding the intricacies of developing and managing affordable housing which includes improving systems in property management, asset management and housing development.

- Capable of fostering an open dialogue between nonprofit and for-profit developers encouraging greater efficiencies while maintaining a commitment to the highest possible design and construction.
- Dedicated to sustainable design and management standards and continuation of the SeaGreen program to compliment state and national programs and encourage sustainable development and management.
- Able to maintain and build a strong management team within the department and proven to be a capable manager of a large department.

It is also our hope that you will work rapidly to select a permanent replacement to lead the Office of Housing. We ask this at the same time that we understand and wish to be respectful of the many urgent priorities that you must address during this transition period. We offer our recommendations in the spirit of support and are willing to play a role in the process as you might see fit.

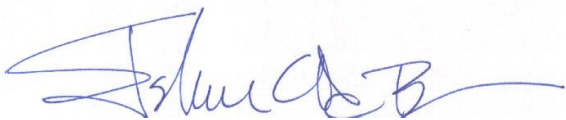
We share your confidence and high respect for Bill Rumpf as the acting director. Our sense of urgency in finding a permanent replacement for this position is based in current environmental realities and our belief that without a permanent department head, these realities cannot be addressed with full vigor. First, the funding environment for the development of affordable housing is in critical condition particularly with zero funding for the State Housing Trust Fund. A permanent director can continue the work Adrienne began in addressing these funding issues locally and in supporting State-level efforts to fill the gap.

We are also concerned that as a community, we may miss a rare opportunity to acquire land at reduced pricing in a down economy and take advantage of a marketplace where building costs are up to 10% lower than the past several years. Timely decisions in these areas of concern requires a permanent director who has full authority to move with all due haste.

We recommend convening a panel of housing industry and community leaders to develop a process to identify a set of high caliber candidates for this position as quickly as practical.

We thank you again for taking this under consideration and wish to reiterate that we fully understand the multiple priorities that you face and offer our recommendations in the spirit of support. We look forward to working with you and your staff on this issue. If you have any questions, please contact me or Barbara Wilson, the Commission's Executive Director.

Sincerely,



Joshua Brower, Chair  
Seattle Planning Commission

cc:  
Seattle City Council  
Deputy Mayor Phil Fugii  
Bill Rumpf, Interim Director Office of Housing

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION RECORD OF DISCLOSURE & RECUSAL:**

Commissioner Brower disclosed that his firm Tupper Mack Brower, PLLC, represents land owners and developers of residential, multi-family and commercial projects in Seattle.

Commission Hough-Beck disclosed that her firm, HBB, works on housing projects in Seattle some may be affordable.

Commissioner Persons disclosed that he is the Director of Capitol Hill Housing and they receive significant funding from the Office of Housing for the purpose of building and managing affordable housing.